

ARIZONA'S

Instrument to Measure Standards

WRITING

Sample Writing Exemplar Papers

**AIMS
HIGH SCHOOL**

FORM WA-ST-1



LANGUAGE ARTS

SAMPLE WRITING RESPONSES

(Exemplar/Anchor Papers)

Sample Papers

The following sample papers are actual student responses to the extended writing task in the spring 1999 and fall 2000 administration of AIMS Writing. Several sample responses are given for each performance level: Exceeds the Standard, Meets the Standard, Approaches the Standard, and Falls Far Below the Standard and for each average score point. These are provided to indicate the level of writing skill demonstrated at each performance level. Analytic trait scores are included with an explanation of the scores citing the specific language from the Official Scoring Guide that supports/explains the score. These scores represent the scoring decisions and comments made by committees of Arizona high school teachers in range-finding sessions with National Computer Systems, who is responsible for scoring students' writing.

How Papers are Scored

National Computer Systems currently holds the scoring contract for AIMS Writing. Scoring directors from NCS meet with Arizona high school teachers from across the state in range-finding sessions after each administration of high school AIMS Writing. These sessions are designed to review samples of student work and make necessary and appropriate scoring decisions. The committee defines the range of performance at each score point on the six point scoring guide. Anchor papers (exemplars) are selected to represent the range of work at each point on the scale. These anchor sets are used in the training of NCS raters when the actual AIMS Writing is scored. Borderline issues are also addressed at range-finding that represent some of the decision making problems raters face. Thus, Arizona teachers are making the scoring decisions that NCS upholds in scoring Arizona students' writing.

Papers are scored outside the state of Arizona at various NCS Performance Assessment Scoring Centers across the country. Highly qualified, experienced readers are essential to achieving and maintaining a high degree of consistency and reliability in scoring student responses. Each candidate successfully completes a personal interview, a scoring screening sample, an editing test, and a writing sample exercise. NCS/ PASC actively seeks ethnic and racial diversity among professional readers. Raters are required to have the following qualifications: a minimum of a bachelor's degree in an appropriate academic discipline, demonstrable ability in performance assessment scoring, and (preferably) teaching experience. NCS/PASC has a proven methodology for training readers (raters). Raters participate in training on the scoring guide using anchor sets before they begin scoring. The goal is to convey to the raters the decisions made by the range-finding committees and to help raters internalize the scoring protocol so that they may effectively apply those decisions. After scoring several practice sets, raters must "qualify" by demonstrating a specified level of consistency in scoring. When actual scoring begins, all papers are read and scored by two readers. These are "blind reads", meaning the second rater does not see the first rater's scores. Adjacent scores are considered in agreement and will be recorded as an average. For example, if the first rater gives the paper a "4" in the trait of ideas, and the second rater gives the paper a "3" in the trait of ideas, the score will be recorded as a "3.5" in ideas. Non-adjacent scores are decided by a third, ("resolution"), reader, a highly qualified scoring leader at NCS. All raters' scores are monitored through "back-reading" by table leaders which acts as a guard against reader drift from the scoring guide. Blind validity papers are also used as a second method of ensuring accuracy. These are papers that have been previously scored and are presented as unscored papers. Raters who demonstrate inaccuracy are retrained or dismissed. With these precautions in place, score reports indicate less than 10% of essays require a resolution read.

Suggestions for Using Exemplar (Anchor) Papers

For the Teacher

Using sample papers can be a very effective strategy to help students understand what makes writing work and what the expectations are for AIMS Writing. Viewing these samples on a large screen in the classroom will provide an excellent opportunity for a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each paper in terms of the six traits of writing. Have students score papers individually using the *Official Scoring Guide to AIMS*, and then discuss scores as a group to reach consensus. Students can compare their scores to the given scores and consider the raters' comments that provide an explanation of the scores. A discussion will enable students to resolve discrepancies between their scores and raters' scores. This process will help students understand the rationale behind the given scores (even if the student doesn't agree with the score), and the way each score point is being interpreted for the purpose of statewide assessment. Students can then discuss how they might revise and edit each paper to improve it using the scoring guide, and then re-score their revised and edited versions. In this manner, students will have the opportunity to use the scoring guide, recognize the range of responses for each point on the scale, and examine the expectations for the extended writing portion of AIMS.

For the Student

Students may also use these samples independently in the same manner and for the same purpose, as described above and as suggested in *The High School Student Guide to AIMS*.

Calculation of Total Writing Score

To calculate the total score for the writing test (TW) use the following formula:

M = total points from the multiple choice items (1 point per item correct)

S = total points from the short answer responses

E = total score for the extended writing item (see Note 1)

$$TW = M + S + (2 \times E)$$

- **Note:** The extended writing score ("E") is calculated by adding all the individual trait scores and dividing this total by 6. This gives the average trait score over all 6 traits. Then this average score is rounded to the nearest integer (.1 to .4 round down, .5 to .9 round up). Rounding occurs only once; i.e., the average score.

Example: Suppose Trait 1 = 3.5, Trait 2 = 4.0, Trait 3 = 3.5; Trait 4 = 3.0; Trait 5 = 4.5; Trait 6 = 3.0

Then, $3.5 + 3.0 + 3.5 + 3.0 + 4.5 + 3.0 = 20.5$

Divide 20.5 by 6: $20.5 \div 6 = 3.42$

Then round this answer to the nearest integer: 3.42 rounds to 3. This is the score to use whenever "average trait score" is required.

Performance Level Descriptors – Extended Writing

Falls Far Below*

Writing at this level is usually characterized as extremely limited or simply unclear. Attempts at development are minimal. The paper is often too short to demonstrate any evidence of the trait. The paper may need extensive editing, or the writer has not produced enough writing to demonstrate effective use of conventions.

Approaches the Standard**

Writing at this level has a purpose and main ideas that are easily identifiable, with some supporting details (although they may be limited and undeveloped). The writer attempts to organize ideas, but the organization may be skeletal, with limited use of effective transitions. There is some sense of audience, although it may be inconsistent. Word choices work, but in some places may be repetitive or inappropriate. The writer demonstrates control of simple sentence constructions, but more complex sentences may be awkward. The sentences lack variety. Some control of basic writing conventions is evident; errors in grammar and usage do not impede meaning, but distract the reader. There is a significant need for editing.

Meets the Standard**

Writing at this level contains a purpose and main ideas that are clear and focused. The writer provides details to support and develop the main ideas. The paper is organized with a clear beginning, middle, and ending; transitions, though present, may be formulaic. The writer demonstrates a sense of audience awareness and commitment to the topic. Effective use of language conveys the intended message. Word choice is functional and appropriate. The writer demonstrates some control over complex sentence structure, and an attempt is made to vary sentence patterns. Standard writing conventions are used effectively with a moderate need for editing.

Exceeds the Standard**

Writing at this level presents interesting and engaging ideas with a thorough and balanced exploration of the topic. The writer makes connections and shares insights. The organization enhances the central idea; smooth, effective transitions move the reader from one idea to the next. The writing demonstrates a strong sense of audience with an expressive, engaging, or sincere voice. A wide range of words, carefully chosen, provides energy to the writing. The writer demonstrates control over strong and varied sentence constructions that are placed for impact, enhance meaning and add interest. Strong control of a broad range of writing conventions is evident, with little or no need for editing.

What Score is Needed to “Meet the Standard”

An average of “4” has been determined as “meeting the standard” in extended writing. A high school student may pass AIMS Writing one of two ways:

- a) by scoring a total scale score at the “Meets the Standard” or “Exceeds the Standard” level (a scale score of 500 or better).

OR

- b) by scoring an average of “4” on the extended writing essay (see Note 1 on previous page) AND a total scale score at the “Approaches the Standard” level (a scale score between 431 and 499).

*These descriptors were taken directly from the *Official Scoring Guide to AIMS*, available on our web site at www.ade.az.gov

** These descriptors were taken from the *Official Scoring Guide to AIMS* and the Specific High School Performance Level Descriptors, adopted by the State Board 4.26.99.

Extended writing prompt from AIMS Writing Form A administered in spring 1999 and fall 2000:

A friend is considering dropping out of school. Explain why your friend wants to drop out and what the benefits of staying in school are. Back up your advice with logical reasons and specific examples.

Keep in mind the traits of good writing:

- well-developed ideas
- carefully selected words
- varied and fluid sentence structure
- a voice appropriate to audience and purpose
- good organization

Remember to edit for spelling, grammar, punctuation and capitalization.

(Note: In the actual AIMS Writing, students are given one page for prewriting/planning and two pages for drafting. They are provided with a Writer's Checklist to revise and edit their draft. Final copies of the persuasive essay are written in the students' answer document. Only the final copy is scored.)

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 1
Title: "My Business"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

If He Quits school, that ain't my buisness.

Exemplar #S-1**Title: “My Business”****Average Trait Score: 1.0 - Falls Far Below the Standard**

Ideas 1	Extremely limited; too short to demonstrate the development of an idea.
Organization 1	Failure to provide a beginning, middle and ending.
Voice 1	The writing lacks commitment or involvement.
Word Choice 1	Extremely limited range of words.
Sentence Fluency 1	Too short to demonstrate fluency.
Conventions 1	Frequent errors in an extremely limited sample (capitalization, apostrophe, spelling).

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 2
Title: "Really Failing"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

well I think my friend wants to drop out of school because she is really failing in school and she thinks that that is it well I think that she should stay in school because if she doesn't get a diploma she aint going to be able to find a job nowcar and thats what I think.

Exemplar #S-2**Title: “Really Failing”****Average Trait Score: 1.8 (rounded to 2.0) - Falls Far Below the Standard**

Ideas 1	Extremely limited; attempts at development are minimal or non-existent. Barely goes beyond the prompt.
Organization 2	Some attempts at sequencing, but lacks an organizational structure. A missing or extremely undeveloped beginning, middle and ending. A lack of transitions, or when present, is overused. (<i>Well I think</i>)
Voice 2	Little sense of involvement or commitment; a lack of audience awareness. (<i>She aint going to be able to find a job nowear.</i>)
Word Choice 2	Language is monotonous and repetitious. (<i>Well, I think...she thinks that that is it...and that is what I think.</i>)
Sentence Fluency 2	Sentence patterns are monotonous, significant number of rambling constructions (<i>I think that she should stay in school because if she doesn't get a deploma she ain't going to be aible to find a job nowear and that is what I think.</i>)
Conventions 2	Frequent errors (spelling, internal punctuation, apostrophe) in a limited sample. (<i>realy, aible, nowear, deploma, doesnt, thats</i>)

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 3
Title: "School is Boring"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

ONE OF MY FRIENDS WANTS TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL, BECAUSE HE THINKS SCHOOL IS BORING AND IT NEVER ENDS. ALSO HE SAID'S HOMEWORKS ARE HARD TO UNDERSTAND, HE RATHER WORK IN A SPORTS STORE THAN GO TO SCHOOL AND JUST LISTEN TO TEACHERS TALK ALOT. HE SAID'S IT'S BORING IT'S NOT FUN GOING TO SCHOOL. MY ADVICE TO HIM IS HE SHOULD NOT DROP OUT. HE SHOULD STAY IN SCHOOL. HE NEEDS TO LEARN SO HE CAN GET A BETTER JOB IN LIFE. I KEPT TELLING HIM WOULD YOU RATHER HAV A JOB BEING A LAWYER OR WORK IN A SPORTS STORE. HE COULD GET INTO THE HOMEWORK IF HE GETS SOME HELP OR SOMETHING AND THEN HE WONT THINK IT IS HARD. HE WONT GET A GOOD CAREER.

Exemplar #S-3**Title: “School is Boring”****Average Trait Score: 2.5 (rounded to 3.0) - Approaches the Standard**

Ideas 3	The reader can understand the main idea although they may be overly broad and simplistic; attempts at support are limited in scope, uneven and overly general. <i>(it’s boring...it’s not fun...stay in school so he can get a better job...get a good career...)</i>
Organization 3	Some attempts at sequencing, but overall structure is skeletal and lapses in places. A beginning is present, but the conclusion is lacking. Placement of details may not always be effective. <i>(He could get into the homework if he gets some help or something. And then he wont think it is hard. He wont get a good career.)</i>
Voice 3	An occasional sense of the writer behind the words, but commitment to the topic seems inconsistent. <i>(Would you rather hav a job being a lawyer or work in a sports store)</i>
Word Choice 2	Language is monotonous and repetitious, overwhelming reliance on overused expressions. <i>(it’s boring, it’s not fun...don’t drop out...stay in school...he needs to learn...get some help or something.)</i>
Sentence Fluency 2	Most constructions are rambling; sentence patterns are monotonous <i>(One of my friends wants to drop out of school because he thinks school is boring and it never ends, also he said’s homeworks are hard to understand, he rather work in a sports store than go to school and just listen to teachers talk alot.)</i>
Conventions 2	Numerous errors in usage, spelling, capitalization and punctuation make the text difficult to read; extensive need for editing. <i>(said’s...homeworks are hard...and Just listen to teachers...)</i>

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 3
Title: "It's OK"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

If you want to flip burgers your hole life or work at some type of construction and always have problems with money I thing dropping out of school is OK. Even if you are behind in school you can still get caught up as long as you stick with it and make something of your self be-sides a ditch digger. there are a lot of jobs out there but if you want a good one you at leased need to have a high school egication. GED is not as good as a regular deploma it means you took the easy way out the short cut, if you trie to get a job with a GED they no your lazy already and there going to hire the people with the deploma. So that's why staying in school is a good idea and GED is not such a good idea.

Exemplar # S-4**Title: “It’s OK”****Average Trait Score: 2.7 (rounded to 3.0) - Approaches the Standard**

Ideas 3	Main idea easily identified but support is overly general and predictable (<i>always have problems with money, get caught up as long as you stick with it, need to have a high school education</i>) Some ideas need further explanation (<i>don’t think GED is as good as a diploma...no your lazy already</i>). Developmental details are often limited in scope, uneven, or somewhat off-topic.. (<i>Even if you are behind in school you can still get caught up as long as you stick with it and make something of yourself be-sides a dich digger.</i>)
Organization 3	Attempts to sequence ideas; opening sentence is present, but conclusion is overly obvious (<i>So that’s why staying in school is a good idea.</i>) Details that may not always fit where placed; lack of effective transitioning between ideas.
Voice 3	An occasional sense of the writer behind the words; however, the voice may shift or disappear and the writing becomes more mechanical. (<i>If you want to flip burgers your hole life or work at some type of construction and always have problems with money I thing dropping out of school is OK.</i>)
Word Choice 3	Language is ordinary and lacks precision, but a basic message is communicated; words that work but rarely capture the reader’s attention; reliance on overused expressions. (<i>always have problems with money, always make it, stick with it, make something of yourself, lots of jobs out there, the easy way out, the short cut</i>)
Sentence Fluency 2	A significant number of rambling constructions; monotonous sentence patterns. (<i>I don’t think GED is as good as a diploma it means you took the easy way out the short cut, if you try to get a job without a GED they no your lazy already and there going to hire the people with the high school diploma</i>)
Conventions 2	Frequent and varied errors in spelling, grammar, usage. Substantial need for editing. (<i>I thing...be-sides...at leased...there for they’re no for know</i>)

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 4
Title: "It Is Unnecessary"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

My friend wants to drop out of school. She thinks that a highschool diploma is unnecessary. She also thinks she will have just as many career choices as a person who graduates. But, she is wrong, very wrong. There are many more advantages to staying in school and graduating.

First of all, without graduating, it is very difficult to get a job. It might be possible to find some work but it won't be a high paying or high quality job. For example, without a high school diploma you are probably more likely to be middle aged and working at mcdonalds.

Second when you graduate, you will be more able to support yourself and a family. At least with a high school diploma you will be able to get a job that pays enough to support yourself. Also, if you decide at some point to get an even better education, you would be able to go on to college. You will also be happier and less stressed if you know you don't have to struggle to support your family.

Finally, by finishing what you started, you will have more respect

for yourself. Finishing high school with your friends will make you proud of yourself. If you drop out, and your friends finish, you will feel bad around them, like you are not as smart as them. You will feel like a quitter. If you graduate you will feel like you really accomplished something. So graduate and do it for yourself.

As you can see, it is very important and necessary to get a high school diploma. The reasons and benefits are: getting a better job, being able to support yourself and your family and feeling a sense of accomplishment. In the long run, it is the best choice and your life will be better because of it.

Exemplar # S-5**Title: “It Is Unnecessary”****Average Trait Score: 4.1 (rounded to 4.0) - Meets the Standard**

Ideas 4	Easily identifiable purpose and clear main idea; supporting details that are relevant but may be overly general or limited in places.
Organization 4	Order and structure are present, but may seem formulaic (transitions: <i>first, second, finally, as you can see</i>); organization is predictable, but helps the reader.
Voice 4	A voice is present; the writer demonstrates commitment to the topic; in places the writing is sincere.
Word Choice 4	Words that work; expression is functional; enough variety to convey the intended message (<i>you don’t have to struggle to support your family</i>)
Sentence Fluency 5	A natural, fluent sound; variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text; sentence structure that enhances meaning (<i>she also thinks she will have just as many career choices as someone who graduates. But she is wrong, very wrong...In the long run, graduating is the best choice, and your life will be better .because of it.</i>
Conventions 4	Demonstrates control of standard writing conventions; occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage; internal punctuation sometimes incorrect; spelling that is usually correct; moderate need for editing (<i>highschool, something....But, she is very wrong. There are many more benefits in finishing school. and graduating...you will be able to get a job that pays enough. to support yourself.</i>)

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 4
Title: "My Friend Helen"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

My friend Helen is thinking about dropping out of school. Helen's reasons for wanting to leave school are that she has a difficult time understanding certain things and therefore she does not do well in school. Helen believes school is too hard and she would rather work to earn money. What Helen does not understand is that by staying in school and earning her high school diploma, she would be able to get a better job and earn more money.

Helen does not understand that teachers are always there to give help to those students who need it. I even offered to help her learn the concepts of different subjects so she could raise her grades.

I believe that people should not give up on something just because they believe it might be too hard, or possibly because it might be something they are not good at. My friend should never give up, always try her best, work hard and try to overcome it. She must make things happen for herself.

Helen want a job so she can earn some money, but she does not

understand how much completing high school can benefit a person's life and help them do just that. I believe that Helen is scared and insecure. There are people willing to help her and I hope to convince her to ask for help. Maybe I can show her that she will be better off completing high school at least, and maybe she will learn to set goals for herself and strive to reach them. One day Helen just might overcome all the obstacles she may be forced to face. I hope I can help her understand how important it is that she stays in high school so she can meet her future goals.

Exemplar # S-6**Title: “My Friend Helen”****Average Trait Score: 4.3 (rounded to 4.0) - Meets the Standard**

Ideas/Content 4	Easily identifiable purpose and clear main idea; supporting details that are relevant but may be overly general or limited in places.
Organization 4	Order and structure are present, organization helps the reader, despite some weaknesses (transitions).
Voice 5	The writer seems committed to the topic; the writing is expressive, engaging, sincere. (... <i>teachers are always there to give help to those students who need it. I even offered to help her learn the concepts of different subjects so she could raise her grades....I believe that people should not give up on something just because they believe it might be too hard... I hope I can help her...</i>).
Word Choice 4	Words that work; expression is functional; enough variety to convey the intended message.
Sentence Fluency 4	A natural, fluent sound; variation in sentence structure, length, and beginnings that add interest to the text; sentence structure that enhances meaning (<i>My friend should never give up, always try her best, work hard, and try to overcome it. She must make things happen for herself.</i>)
Conventions 5	Demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions; little need for editing (<i>completeing, obsticles...Helen want a job...</i>)

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 5
Title: "Depression and Drug Use"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

My friend wants to dropout of school. She doesn't feel that she is intelligent enough or cool enough to be successful in a school environment. She is also only sixteen years old. Because many developing young people tend to make irrational decisions, I believe the state should increase the age at which a juvenile is allowed to quit school.

My friend is not very popular in school. Other students often make fun of her, and because she is insecure, she takes these insults very personally. This is a problem many high-schoolers her age struggle with. If she was eighteen, she would be wiser and more focused on college, and would realize that education is the key to success.

My friend is also inclined to make poor decisions, not only about school, but also about her body. My friend is depressed and as a result has turned to using illegal drugs. If she were more ^{mature}, she would realize that drugs are not necessary to make one's-self happy.

My friend does not do well in school. The use of drugs has caused her to become lazy and absentminded. Having poor grades causes tension between herself and her mother, and could possibly cause her to run away from home. It is illegal for a sixteen year old to live by herself in an apartment or house. Because she is only sixteen, she can't find a job that would pay enough to allow my friend to support herself.

These problems not only affect my friend, they affect many teenagers as well. Drug abuse is common in high school. Because eighteen year olds are not going through puberty, they would make better decisions about school, and only they should be allowed to quit.

Exemplar #S-7**Title: “Depression and Drug Use”****Average Trait Score: 5.0 - Exceeds the Standard**

Ideas 5	Clarity, focus and control with a balanced explanation of the topic. The writing makes connections and shares insights. Content and selected details that are well suited to the topic.
Organization 5	Effective sequencing, organizational structure fits the topic and helps move the reader through the text.
Voice 5	The writer seems committed to the topic; conviction and sincerity are present. <i>(My friend is not very popular in school. Other students often make fun of her, and because she is insecure, she tends to take these insults very personally. This is a problem many high schoolers her age struggle with.)</i>
Word Choice 5	Words that convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way appropriate to audience and purpose. <i>(My friend is depressed and as result has turned to using illegal drugs... drug abuse is common in high school.)</i>
Sentence Fluency 5	A natural, fluent sound; sentences are carefully crafted; stylistic control. Some awkwardness in places keeps this from a 6. <i>(She doesn't feel she is intelligent enough or cool enough to be successful in a school environment. She is also only sixteen years old.)</i>
Conventions 5	Demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions; occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage, but little need for editing. <i>(Having poor grades causes tension between herself and her mother, and could possibly cause her to run away from home)</i>

Exemplar Paper for Composite Score of 6
Title: "It Was Surprising"

Directions: Write the final copy of your essay on the following lines.

I couldn't believe it. When my friend announced that she was considering dropping out of school, I knew it would be the biggest mistake of her life. How could I help her understand how school would benefit her both intellectually and socially? How could I make her realize how school can expand one's mind and horizons? School is a challenge, but it is not a challenge that is impossible to overcome. It is important that she understand how this decision will impact her future.

My friend is suffering from the same ailment as many teenagers today - boredom. She finds the schoolwork tedious and does not find it very interesting. What she fails to recognize is that school is what you make it. Some school work may be boring, but it is possible to make learning more interesting for yourself. For example, instead of just completing an assignment in economics, you can study and compare the different theories of economics. You can apply those theories to current news reports about our country's economy. Just because a textbook assignment isn't interesting does not mean it can't be made into one if you look for connections to the real world. While my friend might have a negative view about what she has learned in school, she cannot deny she has indeed acquired an education in her school years. She can read, write, calculate

math, and explain scientific theory. She learned to do these things in school.

School doesn't offer only academic opportunities; it also offers social ones. School provides an environment where you can meet different people who share similar interests. Where else could you find such diversity in one setting? In school one learns to get along with different people. My friend would mess out on these experiences if she dropped out now.

But most of all, dropping out of school will destroy her future. It is difficult enough as it is to get a well-paying job even with a college degree; without a high school diploma it would be nearly impossible. My friend says she wants to have more free time, but that will get boring after awhile (unimproving, boring, than school). Then what? She will have lost an opportunity to earn an education and a decent income. All of her desires, everything she hopes for in life, will never be realized. Dropping out is something she will live to regret forever.

When my friend told me she was considering dropping out of school, I tried to convince her in every way that an education will help make her dreams a reality. I tried to explain that school can provide intellectual challenges and social opportunities essential for success, I hope it had an effect.

Exemplar # S-8**Title: “It Was Surprising”****Average Trait Score: 6.0 - Exceeds the Standard**

Ideas 6	Clear, focused and controlled; a successful discussion centering on turning the intellectual and social into challenges and opportunities that positively impact the future. A thorough balanced exploration of the topic.
Organization 6	Organization that enhances the central idea; Smooth transitioning from idea to idea; more sophisticated conclusion that refers back to initial conversation with friend. (<i>When my friend told me she was considering dropping out I tried to convince her in every way...</i>)
Voice 6	Exceptional sense of writing to be read; formal tone is persuasive, engaging, and interesting (<i>My friend says she wants more free time, but that will get boring after awhile. Then what?... All of her desires, everything she hopes for in life will never be realized.</i>)
Word Choice 6	The writer employs a broad range of words which have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed for impact (<i>expand one’s mind and horizons...this decision will impact her future...intellectual challenges and social opportunities</i>)
Sentence Fluency 6	Sentences are carefully crafted with strong and extensive variation in structures that create an effective combination of power and grace. Clauses, embedded phrases, and parallel structure add complexity and flow to the piece. Clipped sentences are added for impact. (<i>I tried to convince her...I tried to explain...I hope it had an effect.</i>)
Conventions 6	Exceptionally strong control of standard writing conventions in a sufficiently long and complex piece; manipulation of conventions for stylistic effect. (<i>My friend is suffering from the same ailment as many other high schoolers today – boredom...Some school work <u>may</u> be boring, but it is possible to make learning more interesting for yourself.</i>) Parenthetical used effectively to enhance key ideas (<i>even more boring than school</i>); errors are few and minor.